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Identical letters dated 8 May 2008 from the Permanent Representatives of Canada, Denmark, Greece, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, the Republic of Korea and Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

The international community has repeatedly stated its concern about the escalation of acts of piracy and armed robbery against commercial and humanitarian ships in the waters off Somalia. Those acts are increasingly jeopardizing the delivery and distribution of humanitarian assistance, and are contributing to the destabilization of the region. They also pose a major threat to the safety of international maritime traffic and, thereby, to international peace and security.

The General Assembly, in its resolution on oceans and the law of the sea, the Security Council, in its resolutions 1772 (2007) and 1801 (2008), the Secretary-General, in his reports on Somalia, and the International Maritime Organization, in its resolution A.1002(25), have repeatedly stressed the necessity of addressing this problem in a broader context.

The international community has welcomed the ongoing initiative to protect the World Food Programme humanitarian convoys through the waters off Somalia, in effect since September 2007, successively by French, Danish and, currently, Dutch naval forces. Careful consideration should be given in the future to considering these initiatives as part and parcel of the tasks that the United Nations should undertake in discharging its duties relating to the maintenance of peace and security in Somalia. However, the initiatives in place remain insufficient and States and international organizations should give a new impulse to further proposals effectively to contribute to addressing the serious acts of piracy and armed robbery through the implementation of adequate and sustained measures, in cooperation with the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia and with the support of the international community.

In that regard, on 27 February 2008, the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, in a letter addressed to the President of the Security Council, requested

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urgent assistance from the Council in securing the international and territorial waters off the coast of Somalia for the safe conduct of shipping and navigation.

The Security Council, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, is currently working effectively to address this request. The initiatives now before the Council outline a framework for action under Chapter VII of the Charter that, in broad terms, would entail:

- Calling upon States and regional organizations to take action, in cooperation with the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, to protect shipping involved with the transportation and delivery of humanitarian aid and United Nations-authorized activities
- Stressing the respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Somalia and calling upon States and interested organizations to provide technical assistance to Somalia and nearby coastal States
- Authorizing States, as a response to the request of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, to enter the territorial waters of Somalia for the purpose of deterring, preventing and suppressing acts of piracy, using all necessary means for that purpose, in close cooperation with the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, upon notification to the Secretary-General, and in accordance with applicable international law, including international human rights law

These initiatives should be fully supported by Member States and the international community, as they will serve effectively to address the threat posed by piracy and armed robbery and to clarify the legal framework and the future implications, in line with international law, of an integrated and strengthened action of States and international organizations, in cooperation with the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia and other States in the region.

Member States must enhance their cooperation with other States and with international organizations, including relevant regional organizations, to assist in these efforts around Somalia. However, the medium-term objective of a coordinated and joint action should be aimed at improving measures for the provision of adequate technical assistance already in effect, or those which are still under discussion, in particular, by the International Maritime Organization. Finally, in the medium and long-term, determined action by the international community should address the challenge of ensuring peace and stability in Somalia itself, without which piracy and armed robbery in the waters of the region could not be effectively tackled in a sustained manner.

We should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 77 (a), and of the Security Council.

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(*Signed*) Carsten **Staur**
Permanent Representative of Denmark

(*Signed*) John **Mourikis**
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